



Academic Services
September to October 2018

Senate Committees'

e-Newsletter

Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the Senate Committees' Newsletter for 2018/19. This publication aims to keep the University community better informed about discussions and decisions occurring within Senate (the University's supreme academic body) and its Standing Committees (the four Committees to which Senate has delegated its authority in particular areas). We hope you find it interesting and informative.

Report from Senate

Overall responsibility for regulating and superintending teaching and discipline, and promoting research.

Documentation for the E-Senate meeting held from 11 to 19 September 2018, and the Senate meeting held on 03 October 2018, is available at <http://edin.ac/1FL8RrJ>

Senate discussed several matters of strategic importance: alongside presentations and discussion on **Teaching and Academic Careers**, it considered and commented on **proposals for enhancing the student experience** (<https://edin.ac/2qgiq3j> Paper A). Senate was also given the opportunity to contribute ideas to refresh the University's **Strategic Plan**.

The **Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy** was re-launched at the meeting.

An **external review of Senate and its Committees** will shortly be undertaken in order to comply with the Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance. Jennifer Barnes of Saxton Bampfylde will undertake the review, which will involve an overview of the operation of Senate and its Committees, and discussion with key stakeholders.

For further information about any Senate matter, please contact theresa.sheppard@ed.ac.uk

This newsletter is produced by Academic Services.

Please direct any queries or suggestions to Philippa.Ward@ed.ac.uk.

Further information on Senate and its Standing Committees is available at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees>.



Report from Learning & Teaching Committee (LTC)

Responsible for undergraduate, taught postgraduate and other forms of academic provision, apart from postgraduate research and higher degrees.

Documentation for the meeting held on 18 September is available at <http://edin.ac/1tHNcJB>

Key topics considered included:

Lecture Recording Policy

Following wide stakeholder consultation, the University will implement its new lecture recording policy from 1 January 2019. More information on the Policy can be found at [Lecture Recording Policy FAQ](#)

Student Survey Results

(<https://edin.ac/2q887hr> Papers B1-3)

LTC considered the 2018 National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) and Course Enhancement Questionnaire (CEQ) results. These are a cause for concern, and proposals for enhancing the student experience were considered by the University Court on 1 October and Senate on 3 October 2018 (as above).

Teaching and Academic Careers (TACs) Project

(<https://edin.ac/2q887hr> Paper C)

The University Executive has established a TACs task group to help the University make progress in valuing excellent teaching within academic career paths. A set of draft guiding principles for the project has been developed and is currently being consulted on: <https://edin.ac/2q80x6o>. The task group will consider whether there is a need to change or clarify existing, relevant University policies and procedures in Semester 2 of 2018/19.

Student Mental Health Strategy

(<https://edin.ac/2q887hr> Paper G)

LTC was provided with an update on the implementation of the University's Student Mental Health Strategy <https://edin.ac/2Q6dkBI>, introduced in January 2017. The Committee noted that there is more demand than ever for mental health support, reduced stigma, and increased awareness of the services offered by the University in this area. As a result, resources for mental health support are being increased year on year. The University has adopted the Stepped Care Model of mental health support, and is considering a range of developments to meet the increased demand.

For further information about any LTC matter, please contact Philippa.Ward@ed.ac.uk



Senate Committee Dates for 2018/19

Senate	E-Senate	LTC	CSPC	REC	QAC
		14 Nov 18	22 Nov 18	6 Nov 18	6 Dec 18
6 Feb 2019	15-23 Jan 2019	23 Jan 19	24 Jan 19	15 Jan 19	28 Feb 19
		13 Mar 19	21 Mar 19	12 Mar 19	25 Apr 19
29 May 2019	7-15 May 2019	22 May	30 May 19	14 May 19	23 May 19

Report from Curriculum & Student Progression Committee (CSPC)

Responsible for the academic regulatory framework, apart from those aspects which are primarily parts of the Quality Assurance Framework.

Documentation for the meeting held on 20 September 2018 is available at <http://edin.ac/2y83LIO>

Key points discussed included:

Service Excellence and Special Circumstances

(<https://edin.ac/2pYCsIQ> Paper A)

CSPC received an update on the work being undertaken by the Student Administration and Support strand of the Service Excellence Programme, in particular, that relating to Special Circumstances. CSPC will be invited to approve the policy dimensions of the final proposals in due course.

Postgraduate Assessment and Progression

(<https://edin.ac/2pYCsIQ> Paper E)

CSPC discussed potential models for changes both to pass marks for Master's degrees, and to the progression hurdle between the taught and research components of the most common type of Master's degree. This discussion followed recommendations contained within the report of the Postgraduate Assessment and Progression Task Group (<http://edin.ac/2trW5z> Paper B).

At its meeting in November 2018, LTC will be considering the University's approach to broader issues regarding marking schemes and practices, and CSPC has committed to exploring potential models further once a course of action has been agreed by LTC.

Programme and Course Approval and Management

(<https://edin.ac/2pYCsIQ> Paper F)

CSPC approved amendments to the [Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy](#), and noted the development of a suite of supporting guidance, <http://edin.ac/2ECBZfy>. This action follows agreement by the Committee to consolidate existing documentation on programme and course approval into a single University suite of documents. Academic Services will now develop a simplified Boards of Studies Terms of Reference document, which will be presented to CSPC for comment, and ultimately approved by resolution.

Mitigating the Impact of Industrial Action

(<https://edin.ac/2pYCsIQ> Paper G)

At its exceptional meeting on 13 April 2018, CPSC approved a set of guidelines and concessions to mitigate the academic impact on students of the Spring 2018 industrial action, while maintaining academic standards. These guidelines are available at <https://edin.ac/2MXirDe>. CSPC discussed the effectiveness of the guidance, agreeing that the measures had operated well in general, and recognising the exceptional amount of time spent by many staff on mitigating the impact of the industrial action.

For further information about any CSPC matter, please contact theresa.sheppard@ed.ac.uk

Report from Quality Assurance Committee

Responsible for the University's academic quality assurance framework

Documentation for the meeting held on 20 September 2018 is available at <http://edin.ac/1MUwq8L>

Annual Quality Reports and Internal Review

(<https://edin.ac/2CCqOkj>, Papers C, D and E)

QAC considers School annual quality reports and themes emerging from the previous year's internal reviews (Teaching and Postgraduate Programme Reviews, TPRs and PPRs) in September each year. This year, the Committee identified several areas which will form the basis of a sharing good practice event in February 2019, in particular initiatives around developing academic communities. Areas for further development include the ongoing challenge of accessing suitable learning and teaching accommodation for growing student cohorts; the pressures on staff time as student numbers expand; and the drop in student satisfaction with the Personal Tutor system.

Thematic Review of Support for Mature Students and Student Parents and Carers

(<https://edin.ac/2CCqOkj>, Paper F)

QAC approved the final report and recommendations. The key findings align with the University's new Widening Participation Strategy, and focus on issues relating to data collection, the disclosure of caring responsibilities and assessment of support needs, and the University's strategic approach to childcare provision and child-friendly campus aspirations. The recommendations of the Review will be taken forward by the individuals and areas identified in the report, which in most instances will involve further consultative and developmental work over the coming year.

External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy

The Committee approved a change (with immediate effect) to this Policy: External Examiners wishing to resign before the end of their normal term of office must now give three months' notice in writing to the appointing College. The change aims to mitigate risks associated with inconsistent operation of the External Examiner system, and brings the University of Edinburgh into alignment with peer institutions. In order to assist Colleges and Schools, QAC also approved a standard, University appointment letter for External Examiners.

For further information about any QAC matter, please contact b.connolly@ed.ac.uk

Report from Researcher Experience Committee (REC)

Responsible for postgraduate research degree training, higher degrees and provision for the training of other, early career researchers.

Documentation for the meeting held on 25 September 2018 is available at <http://edin.ac/IQ528n5>

Go Abroad Opportunities for PGR Students (<https://edin.ac/2CBTJW4>, Paper A)

The Committee discussed Edinburgh Global's plans to encourage more PhD students to make use of Erasmus+ traineeship funding to undertake research or field work in Europe. Examples of activities covered by the funding are:

A supervised research placement at another university or institute, or with an expert in the relevant field

Field work for data collection purposes or to test research findings

Hands-on experience in a laboratory or specialist organisation

Using expertise as a specialist within a work organisation

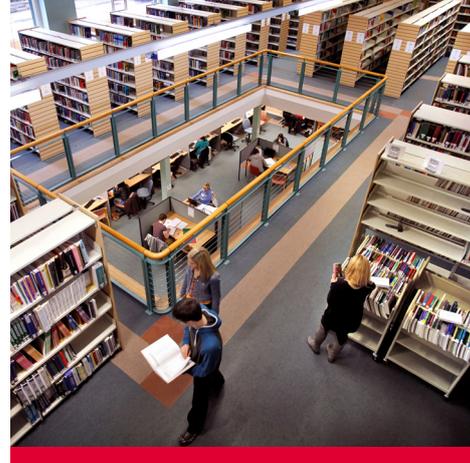
Further information is available at <http://edin.ac/2PrJFTz>.

Supervisor Accreditation

The Committee discussed the University's plans to participate in a UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE) pilot programme on supervisor accreditation. This new initiative will trial an application process with supervisors from a small number of UKCGE member institutions. More information on the pilot is available from patrick.hadoke@ed.ac.uk.

Electronic-only submission of the final version of PhD theses (<https://edin.ac/2CBTJW4>, Paper C)

REC supported a proposal from Library and University Collections to move to online-only submission of final PhD theses from 2020/21. The proposal will help to reduce costs for students by removing the need to print and bind, and for the University by reducing storage requirements. Information Services (IS) is investigating digital curation systems, which will need to be accessible and provide a long-term solution. Disaster recovery is also a key consideration. Further information is available from theo.andrew@ed.ac.uk.



Excellence in Doctoral Research & Career Development Programme Update

The Excellence in Doctoral Education and Career Development Programme is a comprehensive programme of work approved and governed by REC. Launched in January 2017, the Programme focuses on three specific and interrelated areas of the postgraduate research experience: supervisor support and training; mentorship and wellbeing; and personal and professional development record.

- **Supervisor support and training** – a group has been exploring options around creating a CPD framework for doctoral supervisors. In Autumn 2018, the task group will consult stakeholders on proposals for the framework.
- **Mentorship and wellbeing** - the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) and the Students' Association are investigating the options for peer support for PGR students.
- **Personal and professional development record** – this strand, which aimed to identify options for creating an institutional transcript or record for doctoral study, was completed in November 2017. Recommendations are now being considered by the Service Excellence Programme as part of the PGR Lifecycle strand.

For further information about any REC matter, please contact susan.hunter5@ed.ac.uk



Further Information

Information about the Senate Committees' achievements in academic year 2017/18 is provided in their annual report, which was taken to the May 2018 meeting of Senate: <https://edin.ac/2CCfbKQ> Paper C

The next University of Edinburgh Learning and Teaching Conference will take place on Wednesday 19 June 2019 in the John MacIntyre Conference Centre, Pollock Halls of Residence. Please save the date.

Sept / Oct 2018

Meetings covered by the
September / October 2018 Edition

Date	Committee
11 – 19 September	E-Senate
18 September	LTC
20 September	CSPC
20 September	QAC
25 September	REC
03 October	Senate